

# BOOK REVIEWS



## THE OTHER BATTLE OF THE BULGE: OPERATION NORTHWIND.

By Charles Whiting. Avon Books, 1990. 214 Pages. \$4.99, Softbound. Reviewed by Colonel Cole C. Kingseed, United States Army.

Contrary to popular belief, the last great German offensive in the West was not the Ardennes offensive in mid-December 1944, but rather a concentrated attack against Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers' U.S. 6th Army Group just north of the Colmar Pocket.

On the last day of 1944, eight German divisions smashed into General Alexander Patch's Seventh U.S. Army, composed of American and French troops in the vicinity of Strasbourg, the capital of the Alsace-Lorraine region. By the time the Germans retreated across the Rhine the following February, the Allies had sustained more than 40,000 casualties.

In this book, Charles Whiting relates the saga of the men who waged this second Battle of the Bulge. Sometimes prone to exaggeration, he asserts that the Ardennes offensive paled in significance to Hitler's New Year's Eve offensive and that, had the German attack succeeded, the Western Alliance might have collapsed and France could have plunged into political anarchy. Moreover, the author posits that Charles de Gaulle's desire to maintain France's military independence from NATO's command structure a decade later stemmed from General Dwight Eisenhower's apparent willingness to yield Strasbourg to the advancing Germans. Whiting goes so far as to trace the later U.S. involvement in Vietnam to the relationship borne by American and French military leaders in the fighting around Strasbourg. Such an assertion stretches credibility and ignores the realities of international power politics.

What Whiting does do well is describe the desperate fighting that occurred in the initial months of 1945. The Colmar fighting, largely ignored by many military historians, was nothing short of attrition warfare in which both sides suffered catastrophic casualties. French casualties alone neared 30,000 before the Germans were evicted from the Colmar salient. Individual and unit acts of bravery were common throughout the fighting. This

was where Audie Murphy earned his Congressional Medal of Honor, and where the U.S. 3d Battalion, 157th Infantry, cut off and surrounded, was forced to capitulate after reviving the story of another "Lost Battalion" a generation earlier.

Whiting's book could have borne closer editing. Such errors as conflicting dates for the German offensive, and the lack of adequate maps detract from the text. Those shortcomings aside, however, the book is a provocative analysis of infantrymen in winter combat—an interesting narrative about one of this nation's lesser known campaigns.

**BURNSIDE.** By William Marvel. University of North Carolina Press, 1991. 514 Pages. \$22.50. Reviewed by Major Don Rightmyer, United States Air Force.

What is Ambrose P. Burnside to be remembered for, beyond his command of the Union army at the disaster of Fredericksburg in December 1862, and his distinctive side-whiskers that gave us the term *sideburns*? The answer is: a great deal. This new biography of William Marvel sheds light on Burnside's Civil War career and accomplishments that allow for conclusions far different from those his peers and history have generally accorded him.

Burnside graduated from West Point in time to be sent to the Mexican War, but hostilities stopped the day he reported to his unit. He subsequently left the Army in 1853 but returned during the Civil War and first saw combat action at Bull Run in July 1861. He was then dispatched to command troops for a Union expedition against the Carolina coast, and his success there catapulted him into national visibility. He also commanded troops at the battles of South Mountain and Antietam and, upon McClellan's final dismissal in late 1862, was placed in charge of the eastern Army of the Potomac.

Burnside must take much of the blame for the defeat on the frozen plain west of Fredericksburg, but the author persuasively argues that General William B. Franklin's failure to attack as agreed also contributed to the Union defeat. Following an unsuccessful "mud march" and disloyal maneuvering among his

subordinates, Burnside was relieved from command. But he did not retreat to obscurity. He was sent to Ohio, in charge of the Ninth Corps, where he found himself busy fighting both the military and the civilian aspects of the war. Later, he was placed in charge of the Army's Department of the Ohio.

In late 1863 Burnside was assigned to pursue one of the president's pet priorities—military operations in eastern Tennessee—and led the capture of Knoxville. In 1864 he was moved back to a corps command in the east and fought at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg. Following the fiasco at the Crater, he was denied further assignments and finally resigned from the Army on the day of President Lincoln's assassination.

Overall, Ambrose Burnside was an honest and humble soldier. That honesty and humility—along with superiors and subordinates who took personal advantage of those qualities—appeared to be the downfall of his military career and reputation. The author has done much to provide a more objective examination of his performance in action and his abiding loyalty to those with whom he served. This well-written biography provides a sobering look at the interplay of the human personalities and frailties that are found in the military as in any other walk of life. This book gives us a badly needed corrective to the biased and distorted history that has previously found its way into print.

**THE U.S. ARMY IN TRANSITION II: LANDPOWER IN THE INFORMATION AGE.** By Lieutenant General Frederic J. Brown, U.S. Army Retired. An AUSA Book. Brassey's (US), 1993. 224 Pages. \$24.00. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Albert N. Garland, United States Army Retired.

After reading these 200-plus pages, I can only say that they contain too little meat. In the author's defense, though, he says he never intended to offer either "detailed policy and program changes" or "explicit force structure recommendations." He also says he will actually shun "proposing a future defense program," but I found in the book a

number of rather sizable defense programs that he does propose, including those dealing with his beloved M1A2 Abrams tank and all kinds of computer chips.

The author feels the computer chip will be the answer to all of the Army's problems in the future, but I have great difficulty understanding a computer's value to the young infantry platoon leaders or company commanders patrolling the streets of Mogadishu, even as they look forward to tramping the hills of Bosnia.

As usual, the infantry gets the short end of the stick. True, it was given the Bradley, but had to sacrifice its squad organization in the process. (Ever since, the infantry community has been badly divided over the vehicle's use—battle taxi, gun platform, or tank destroyer. The dismount element, what there is of it, is often overlooked entirely.) Aside from the Bradley, however, the infantry has received precious little else during the past 20 years that it did not already have in Vietnam.

Today, no matter what the author seems to think, we are engaged in a war of the future in Somalia. And we may soon be engaged in a similar war in Bosnia. We need a lot more "low tech" weapons and equipment and fewer "high tech" gadgets. We also need to learn how to deal with casualties, lots of them. This is something we knew how to do at one time but something that seems to throw us into a tizzy today when the word is even mentioned. Politicians care little about Clausewitz or the Weinberger doctrine. So, in the infantry, we have to concentrate on training with our basic tools and equipment—rifles and machineguns, light mortars (or we can leave them home), mines and booby traps, flame throwers (do we still have one in the inventory?), grenades, and the like. Somebody might also deliver a decent and reliable weapon the individual soldier can use against armored vehicles.

Finally, if we are going to work closely with other armies, we had better let go of this idea that "we are the best and the brightest," and "we will teach you all you need to know about training and fighting." There are some pretty good armies out there, and we might well listen and learn a thing or two from them.

**SOLDIERS OF THE SUN: THE RISE AND FALL OF THE IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY.** By Meirion and Susie Harries. Random House, 1992. 557 Pages. \$30.00. Reviewed by Dr. Charles E. White, Infantry School Historian.

This book is a fascinating account of the

Imperial Japanese Army, from its creation in 1868 to its defeat in 1945. In those 80 years, Japanese military and civilian elites transformed their tiny island nation into a modern imperial power capable of remarkable military feats. In doing so, they refused to surrender their feudal traditions and customs, thus laying the foundation for the destruction of Japan during World War II.

This is an important book, the first full history of the Imperial Japanese Army to be published in the West. The authors trace the origins of the Imperial Army back to its samurai roots in 19th Century Japan, and then describe its extraordinary rise and fall. They detail the Army's command structure, weaponry, support services, conscription models, educational infrastructure, and training, as well as the brutality that pervaded the daily lives of the men, and the slow deterioration of the officer corps.

But this is more than just a history of an incredible military force. It is the story of a nation trying to find its "place in the sun." The authors examine the creation of the Imperial Army squarely in the larger context of a transforming Japanese society, complete with all the inherent contradictions of social Darwinism and imperialism.

The feverish pace of Japanese modernization during the latter half of the 19th Century caused a tremendous amount of stress for both the army and the society. With it came the end of a homogeneous society and the creation of a synthetic culture in which tradition and modernism led an uneasy coexistence. Thus, it was possible for the Imperial Japanese Army to display the highest qualities of the old code of the Bushido ("the way of the warrior"), while simultaneously possessing such a capacity for barbarism.

This is the story of a highly disciplined army that fell victim to its own mythology. In many respects, it reminds the reader of the United States Army today.

**THE BATTLE OF BATAAN.** By Donald J. Young. McFarland & Company, 1992. 381 Pages. \$39.95. Reviewed by Chris Timmers, Matthews, North Carolina.

In 1990, Lieutenant Colonel John W. Whitman brought forth *Bataan, Our Last Ditch*, a comprehensive study of the battle for and subsequent loss of the Philippines in 1942 (reviewed in the *INFANTRY*, May-June 1991, page 51). Now, some two years later, Donald Young has produced a similar work on the same campaign. Both authors conducted thorough, exhaustive research into existing official records as well as previously writ-

ten accounts. Both authors also interviewed and corresponded with a number of the survivors of the Bataan campaign, and the remembrances of those survivors are produced faithfully.

It is the unenviable task of a reviewer to contrast two works on the same subject published rather close to each other. Young has written a readable and even engrossing account of the United States' first Far East campaign of World War II. But to those of us who have read Whitman's account, the feeling that we've been here before, that all this ground has already been covered, is unavoidable. No one can doubt that Young devoted much of himself to this work, but the accounts of the privation of the U.S.-Filipino forces—their dated weapons, their lack of support from the sea and the air, their making do with scarce resources—have already been addressed in the earlier book.

Nonetheless, Young's book is easier to read and offers a comprehensive account of early Western Pacific campaigns that students can absorb and appreciate more quickly than Whitman's. And Young's work does have a special appeal for those who seek the more personal touch sometimes missing from scholarly wartime studies. One of these touches is his frequent quotes from the poetry of Lieutenant Henry G. Lee, U.S. 31st Infantry—the Poet of Bataan. Excerpts from Lee's poems punctuate various chapters and episodes of Young's work and add a human dimension that is missing from Whitman's book.

When confronted with Young's book, one might be tempted to ask, "Do we need another account of Bataan?" Well, yes we do. There can be no surplus of works that pay honor to the men who sacrificed so much for so long, who endured such suffering only to be forgotten in the euphoria following the triumphant Allied advance through the Western Pacific—an advance that culminated in the signing by the Japanese of a surrender document aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay in September 1945. We must never forget the "Battling Bastards of Bataan," and I hope writers like Young and Whitman never let us.

**TRAGIC MOUNTAINS: THE HMONG, THE AMERICANS, AND THE SECRET WARS FOR LAOS, 1942-1992.** Jane Hamilton-Merritt. Indiana University Press, 1993. 580 Pages. \$29.95. Reviewed by Dr. Joe P. Dunn, Converse College.

I have read and reviewed hundreds of books on the Indochina wars, but few have

had the impact of this seminal work, which vividly depicts the abandonment, betrayal, and attempted genocide of a proud and courageous people. Yet unlike "the killing fields" of Cambodia, the plight of the Hmong is little known, and their fate has been ignored, distorted, and rationalized.

Jane Hamilton-Merritt, now a college professor with a doctorate in Southeast Asian studies, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize as an Indochina war correspondent and combat photographer in the late 1960s. During that time, she attempted unsuccessfully to penetrate the veil of secrecy and cover the clandestine operations in the northern provinces of Laos. After the war, most journalists moved on to other concerns, but her commitment to the Hmong compelled the 14-year preparation of this book.

With official records unavailable for the foreseeable future, the author relied on exhaustive interviews with more than 1,000 French, Americans, Thais, Lao, Hmong, and more than a dozen other Indochinese minorities, as well as other European and Asian participants. Her U.S. sources include policymakers, diplomats, academics, and the various types of Central Intelligence Agency operatives in the secret war. She made 25 trips to refugee camps in Thailand, visited every sizable Hmong community in the United States and France, amassed her own collection of documents, and took more than 10,000 pictures of Hmong life. The resulting volume fills a gap in the larger picture of the Indochina War.

The action begins during World War II as the Hmong joined their French patrons (against Lao and Vietnamese discrimination) to fight Japanese, and later Viet Minh, encroachment into the Hmong's mountainous homeland. Much of the book revolves around the exploits of young Vang Pao, an amazing charismatic military and political leader. During the Viet Minh war, a French officer arranged for this exceptional 18-year-old Hmong soldier to join the Laotian officer corps. He rose to general officer rank and led the Hmong against the communists during the 1960s and 1970s.

The heart of the book deals with the "secret war" in the 1960s and 1970s. It provides the most thorough account available, albeit only a glimpse, of the still enshrouded conflict, introducing such legendary American participants as Jerry "Hog" Daniels, Pop Buell, Colonel Billy, and Richard Secord. More important, it chronicles the incredible bravery, effectiveness, and loyalty of the Hmong soldiers who conducted guerrilla campaigns, provided base defense, rescued U.S. fliers,

collected combat intelligence, and even flew as skilled combat pilots.

The tragedy of the Hmong after U.S. withdrawal is the most disturbing discussion. The author details the systematic genocide by the Laotian communists, including institutionalized rape, torture, murder, removal of children from their families, and other atrocities in the Lao gulag. She carefully documents the chemical-biological toxin "yellow rain" poisoning of the Hmong, and easily refutes the propaganda campaign to depict this barbarism as infestations of "bee feces" or other equally absurd explanations. Moreover, she depicts the continuing misery of those who managed to flee to the squalid refugee camps in Thailand and describes the continuing plight of the 125,000 Hmong who ultimately settled in the United States. Unfortunately, in eagerly pursuing the normalization of relations with the Lao Peoples Democratic Republic, the United States has evinced only minimal concern for Laotian atrocities and the Thais forced the repatriation of the Hmong back to the brutality of the Laotian communists. The result is a sad saga of indifference and perfidy.

Beautifully written, moving, horrifying, and candidly honest, this book—a manifesto for U.S. obligation, moral fortitude and justice—deserves wide attention from scholars and general readers alike.

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**SILENT WINGS AT WAR: COMBAT GLIDERS IN WORLD WAR II.** By John L. Lowden. Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992. 187 Pages. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Jack Mudie, United States Air Force Retired.

The vast majority of rated Army Air Force fliers during World War II wore the wings of pilot, navigator, bombardier, or gunner. There were several other much less common types, such as those for service and glider pilots, which were basic pilot wings with an "S" or a "G," respectively, superimposed. (Glider pilots maintained that the "G" stood for guts, and this book, written by one of their own, supports that claim.)

General Matthew B. Ridgway's prologue salutes the glider pilots as "a special breed of men," and Walter Cronkite, in his introduction, advises would-be warriors that there are many ways to go to war—by land, sea, or air, or by any variations thereof—but if given a choice, his advice (from one who did it) is *never* to go by glider.

Author John Lowden chronicles his own training and combat experiences in the European Theater and includes descriptions of

other occasions when gliders were used in World War II. He maintains that all the Allied uses of gliders were ineffective at best and disasters at worst, such as the fratricidal downing by U.S. and British warships of 34 planeloads of paratroopers during the invasion of Sicily, and the better-known tragedy of the "bridge too far" at Arnhem. He credits only the German planners with the ability to avoid suicidal results in glider operations.

This book is an interesting account of the way most paratroopers entered battle during World War II—as glider-riders. The maps, photographs, and quoted recollections of numerous other fellow-glider pilots add to the quality of this book as a historical autobiography.

Unfortunately for the overall quality of the book, Lowden adds an epilogue that contains a number of unfounded assertions. For example, his disdain for Allied planners in general apparently prompts him to blame the ineffectiveness of the Doolittle Tokyo raid on our Navy's failure to account for the crossing of the International Date Line, thus causing the B-25 aircraft to arrive over the targets in the daylight instead of at night, as planned. He fails to explain how a full 24-hour error would change night to day. Nevertheless, this is a typically excellent publication about a little-heralded facet of World War II operations.

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**HONORABLE TREACHERY: A HISTORY OF U.S. INTELLIGENCE, ESPIONAGE AND COVERT ACTION FROM THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION TO THE C.I.A.** G.J.A. O'Toole. The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1991. 591 Pages. Reviewed by Major Richard Ugino, New York Army National Guard.

This book is a comprehensive, well-researched history of intelligence activities in this country by retired intelligence professional G.J.A. O'Toole. O'Toole uses open sources to examine the growth of the U.S. intelligence profession and presents his story in the crisp, readable narrative. He brings to the forefront an analysis of intelligence against the historical background and framework of the times, rather than simply reciting events as previous works have done. This tactic is highly successful in showing why an operation happened and what effect it had on subsequent events.

O'Toole shows how intelligence played an important role from the time of the Revolution when one of the first "case officers" (and intelligence methods trainers) was George Washington himself. Coupled with

the author's research on both rebel intelligence and British counterintelligence activities during that time, these chapters are among the best and most interesting. The author sheds new light on intelligence organizations, many of them lost in obscurity—for example, the Civil War "Bureau of Military Information," President Woodrow Wilson's "Inquiry," and the better known Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) and Office of Strategic Services (OSS). O'Toole is one of the first to credit ONI with being the exclusive custodian of U.S. intelligence operations and contingency planning in the period from 1898 until after World War I.

While this book focuses on people and events, it also honestly appraises such intelligence failures as the Pearl Harbor attack and the Bay of Pigs incident. About the latter, the author writes: *Had the missiles been discovered after they were operational, air strikes and perhaps an invasion would have been America's response. . . all that stood in the way. . . were the U-2 pilots and a colonel at DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency] who had discovered the missiles before they became operational and contrary to CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] analysis.*

Comprehensive in scope and balanced in its assessments, this is one of the best historical overviews of intelligence that has been published in quite some time. It is of value to all military professionals and a good addition to any reader's library.

**GUARDIANS OF THE GULF: A HISTORY OF AMERICA'S EXPANDING ROLE IN THE PERSIAN GULF, 1833-1992.** By Michael A. Palmer. Free Press, 1992. 328 Pages. \$24.95. Reviewed by Major Harold E. Raugh, Jr., United States Army.

Although the affairs of the Persian Gulf region captured Americans' attention only during the past few decades, U.S. involvement in the area actually began more than 150 years ago.

Michael A. Palmer, an assistant professor of history at East Carolina University and author of previous works on maritime strategy, has chronicled with insight and rich detail the United States' increasing involvement in the Persian Gulf. Beginning with the arrival of a small naval force in Muscat, Oman, in 1833, the U.S. increased its commercial activities in the area, while the British continued to bear the burden of defending Western interests.

The discovery of oil at the beginning of the 20th Century accelerated U.S. capitalism in

the region, but it was not until World War II and its aftermath that the United States developed a coherent strategy for the region. According to Palmer, "American policymakers planned to increase the world's dependence on Middle Eastern oil and expected to have to shoulder political and economic responsibility for the security of the gulf." That expectation became a reality in the late 1960s when the United States supplanted a weakened Great Britain as the dominant political and military power in the gulf.

The book chronicles in rich detail the trials and tribulations of U.S. policy in the region during the tumultuous 1970s, during the Arab oil embargo, and when the United States relied upon and supported the "Twin Pillars" of Iran and Saudi Arabia as coequal regional powers. The book also details and assesses the reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers and the events leading to Saddam Hussein's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM have been, to date, the culmination of U.S. policy in the gulf and incontrovertible evidence of American resolve. The chapters that describe these events are especially interesting. The author suggests that the Allied ground plan to maneuver around the Iraqi right flank was not an especially innovative strategem. "In fact," Palmer writes, "given the state of current U.S. Army doctrine, the size of the force deployed to Saudi Arabia, and the geography of the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations, [General Norman] Schwarzkopf had little choice but to go around the Iraqi right flank." Palmer also argues convincingly that the DESERT STORM deception plan was not as effective, or as responsible for the Iraqi defeat, as has been claimed.

Throughout the book, Palmer demonstrates a superb grasp of military operations, especially the related technological aspects of aerial and naval warfare. His depth of research and his skillful use of relevant primary and secondary source material are shown clearly in 46 pages of endnotes and 13 pages of bibliography. Three pages of maps are also worthwhile.

This is an enthralling, singularly outstanding book, a model of clarity and good scholarship. *Guardians of the Gulf* is an indispensable addition to the libraries of those who served in the Persian Gulf and to anyone who is interested in this volatile region where "U.S. policy . . . must be considered a success."

**RECENT AND RECOMMENDED  
AMERICAN HERITAGE CIVIL WAR**

**WALL CALENDAR.** Full color lithographs and paintings. Commentary by Stephen W. Sears. Workman Publishing (708 Broadway, New York, NY 10003), 1993. 28 Pages. \$9.95.

**THE READY BRIGADE OF THE 82ND AIRBORNE IN DESERT STORM: A COMBAT MEMOIR BY A HEADQUARTERS COMPANY COMMANDER.** By Dominic J. Caraccilo. McFarland & Company, 1993. 213 Pages. \$16.95, Softbound.

**THE MILITARY EXPERIENCE IN THE AGE OF REASON.** By Christopher Duffy. Atheneum Publishers, 1988. 346 Pages. \$24.95.

**REFORGING THE IRON CROSS: THE SEARCH FOR TRADITION IN THE WEST GERMAN ARMED FORCES.** By Donald Abenheim. Princeton University Press, 1989. 266 Pages. \$29.95.

**AUSTRIAN SPECIALIST TROOPS OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS.** Text by Philip J. Haythornthwaite. Color Plates by Bryan Fosten. Men at Arms Series No. 223. Osprey, 1990. 48 Pages.

**THE AGE OF TAMERLANE.** Text by David Nicole. Color Plates by Angus McBride. Men-at-Arms Series No. 222. Osprey, 1990. 48 Pages.

**THE LIFE AND DEATH OF HERMANN GOERING.** By Ewan Butler and Gordon Young. First published in hardcover in 1951. A David and Charles Military Book. Sterling, 1990. 256 Pages. \$8.95, Softbound.

**SECRET WARFARE: THE BATTLE OF CODES AND CIPHERS.** By Bruce Norman. First published in hard cover in 1973. A David and Charles Military Book. Sterling, 1990. 192 Pages. \$8.95, Softbound.

**THE RETREAT FROM BURMA, 1941-1942.** By James Lunt. First published in hard cover in 1986. A David and Charles Military Book. Sterling, 1990. 328 Pages. \$8.95, Softbound.

**HITLER: A STUDY IN TYRANNY.** By Alan Bullock. A reprint of the 1971 abridged edition. HarperCollins, 1991. 489 Pages. \$12.95, Softbound.

**TOP GUNS: AMERICA'S FIGHTER ACES TELL THEIR STORIES.** By Joe Foss and Matthew Brennan. Pocket Books, 1991. 338 Pages. \$21.95.

**RUSSIAN IMPERIAL MILITARY DOCTRINE AND EDUCATION, 1832-1914.** By Carl Van Dyke. Contributions in Military Studies No. 105. Greenwood, 1990. 216 Pages. \$55.00.

**ICE-BREAKER: WHO STARTED THE SECOND WORLD WAR?** By Viktor Suvorov. Translated by Thomas B. Beattie. Viking, 1990. 364 Pages. \$22.95.

**MODERN MILITARY DICTIONARY: ENGLISH-ARABIC/ARABIC-ENGLISH.** Second Edition. By Maher S. Kayyali. Hippocrene, 1991. 250 Pages. \$30.00.

**SEALS: UDT/SEAL OPERATIONS IN VIETNAM.** By T.L. Bosiljevac. Ballantine, 1991. 272 Pages. \$5.95, Softbound.

**BATTLEFRONT VIETNAM.** By Tom Carhart. Warner Books, 1991. 180 Pages. \$4.95, Softbound.

**BODYGUARD OF LIES.** By Anthony Cave Brown. Originally published in hard cover in 1975. Morrow, 1991. A Quill Book. 947 Pages. \$16.95, Softbound.